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THE JAPANESE ELECTION

by Kiyoshi K. Kawakami

The conservative landslide, coupled with the Communist advance, in the Japanese parliamentary election of January 22 was as much of a surprise in Japan as anywhere. Until the very eve of the voting the relatively conservative Democratic-Liberal Party did not expect to secure more than 200 seats in the House of Representatives, while the Communists hoped for at most 12 out of the total of 466 seats.

Both the Right and the Left were agreeably fooled, for the voters elected 264 Liberals and 35 Communists. Before the election there were only 150 Liberals and 4 Communists in the House. On the other hand, Socialist representation was cut down from 98 to 49, and the Democratic from 90 to 68. For the first time since the war a single party -- and it is a conservative party -- now has a clear majority of the more important legislative body.

That the Japanese are keenly interested in politics is apparent in the steady growth of votes cast at the three national elections since the surrender. In 1946 and 1947 roughly 24 million and 27 million, respectively, went to the polls. This year the figure increased to 30,509,179, or 70 per cent of the total electorate.

The current gain was achieved in spite of the new election law, severely restricting electioneering activities. Under this law newspapers are forbidden to support or denounce any particular candidate, and no candidate is allowed to engage campaigners to speak for him at public meetings. These measures were meant to forestall corrupt practices and to reduce election costs, as well as to encourage independent thinking on the part of the electorate.

The law was so drastic that the Government Section of the American GHQ was critical of it. Yet the election proved, apparently, so gratifying to General MacArthur that he issued this statement:

> "The people of the free world everywhere can take satisfaction in this enthusiastic and orderly Japanese election which, at a critical moment in Asiatic history, has given so clear and decisive a mandate for the conservative philosophy of government."

II

The unexpectedly large number of votes cast for the Liberal and Communist parties signifies, first of all, a popular revulsion against the Democratic and Socialist parties. Both of these have been under

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fire because of corruption among their leading members, in collusion with upstart, get-rich-quick, industrialists.

True, the Liberal Party is itself not entirely above suspicion. Indeed, its opponents tried to smear its leader, former Premier Shigeru Yoshida. But these tactics backfired, putting Yoshida in a position where he can now control the Diet without resorting to the expedient of coalition with any other party or parties.

The Communists have been boasting that theirs is the only party with untainted hands. This protestation of self-righteousness does not deceive many. Yet none dares to criticize the Communists openly. If Chiang Kai-shek, who was America's ally, can be threatened with execution by the Reds then certainly no Japanese leader will invite Communist vengeance. Moreover, the financial affairs of the Japanese Communist Party cannot be investigated without calling the Soviet Mission at Tokyo into question. The Japanese, under the occupation, are forbidden to say anything, or take any action, which might cause dissension among the occupying Allies.

The Communist Party put 1,500 candidates in the field in the recent Japanese election, each spending an estimated 250,000 yen ($925). That makes an estimated total of 375 million yen. What is its source?

The most important source of Red revenue appears to be the black-marketing of a vermifuge called santonin, allegedly smuggled in steady stream in Soviet diplomatic pouch and in small boats from Vladivostok, North Korea, and Saghalien. Due, perhaps, to malnutrition among the Japanese during and since the war there is great demand for this anthelmintic, of which Russia has a virtual monopoly in the world market.

Tax "fixing" is another source of Red income. It is well-known that the Japanese Treasury Department, in its lower levels, is permeated with fellow travellers. For a fee, they will "take care" of the tax returns of those who contribute liberally to Communist coffers.

When Russia occupied Manchuria, North Korea, Saghalien, the Soviet authorities seized large amounts of Japanese banknotes. In the early days of the Allied occupation of Japan it was said that much of the seized currency was made available to Japanese Communists, to build their present effective organization.

The new Japanese Constitution has provisions for parliamentary investigation of subversive activities. However, for the reasons stated, these provisions will remain inoperative with respect to the Communist Party, at least during the occupation period.

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Also significant, in the election results, is the clear indication of growing restiveness under the occupation. A month ago Keyes Beach, chief of the Associated Press Bureau in Toyko, reported:

> "The Japanese attitude towards the Americans is changing from one of meek subservience to thinly disguised and often open resentment. . . . No one likes to be the victim of segregation. The Japanese are barred from occupation buildings. They must use separate elevators or walk up long flights of stairs. They must use separate lavatories. They must watch Allied trains go by half empty while their own trains are miserably crowded."

The Japanese cannot even enter hotels assigned to Americans. Here is a denial of elementary civil rights that the Reds can and do use with telling effect. The Japanese are racially supersensitive. Vanquished, they cannot speak out, but their enforced silence renders their resentment the more poignant. Secretly, they admire the Communist agitators who dare to defy the alien overlord. In Japan, the typical Communist argument runs somewhat like this:

American solicitude for Japan's democratization and recovery is hypocritical. America's real interest here is strategic. She is converting our country into a military base in anticipation of war with Russia. In the name of democracy America has ordained that we shall be disarmed. But the United States is making its own military preparations on our soil and at our expense. Surely this will make these beautiful islands a battleground in a war in which we have no interest and no say. American imperialism is working to turn Japan into an American colony.

Such argument appeals to a large segment of the populace. Except for the innate Japanese aversion to Communism, the Communists on January 22 would have won even more votes than they did.

The victorious Liberals, identified with the bourgeoisie, to use Red nomenclature, incline to regard American military installations as essential to Japan's security. They feel, however, that these installations should be built and maintained at America's expense, not as a part of the occupation costs charged to Japan. If Japan must help to pay for America's cold war with Russia, then the Liberals also favor an early termination of occupation.

Shigeru Yoshida, undisputed leader of the now dominant party, is a true believer in political and economic liberalism. He argues that Japan's recovery can be expedited if its economy is freed from the shackles of controls and red tape. His ideas run somewhat like this:

Let the Japanese build or charter ships, man them with Japanese crews, and regain some of their lost shipping. This would end high

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dollar charges for costly foreign shipping, and instead would create a handsome dollar exchange in Japanese favor. Let the Japanese manufacture whatever they think most profitable. Let them buy and sell where they will on the basis of a free economy. Let them borrow money from private sources abroad to rebuild their industry. The Japanese economy has been keyed to scarcity because the country is poor in natural resources. Yet the Japanese have managed to create a semblance of adequacy out of chronic inadequacy. No foreigners can do it better.

IV

One of the most important items on Yoshida's program is a sweeping reduction of bureaucratic personnel. Today the Japanese Government is saddled with 2.8 million jobholders, twice the pre-surrender number. Yoshida wants to reduce this by 40 per cent.

The expansion of the bureaucracy has gone hand-in-hand with the multitudinous controls imposed by the occupation. Incidentally, these controls have been a fertile source of petty graft, for traders, manufacturers, even plain householders often find it expedient to bribe bureaucrats in charge of rationing and priorities, etc.

On December 17, last year, the United States Government, through General MacArthur, urged upon Tokyo speedy attainment of nine objectives, the foremost of which was budget balancing. Yoshida's idea of bureaucratic retrenchment, if carried out, would help materially to this end. But it cannot be carried out unless the system of controls is changed or eliminated.

The American directives of December 17 point in the opposite direction. For they include strengthening and expanding price controls; tightening foreign exchange controls as well as maintaining the present system of rationing and allocation.

The Japanese budget adopted last May amounted to 400 billion yen. Last November a supplementary budget of 69 billion yen was adopted. Of these sums about one-fourth goes to pay occupation cost.

True, American food brought in to succor the Japanese is worth more than the sums paid for the occupation, and the Japanese are grateful for that. But is there not a better way to feed the Japanese? Suppose that the occupation were terminated. Then Japan could use the money thus saved to buy its own food. This would restore that sense of self-respect and self-reliance which must underlie healthy political life.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 5

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By Frank C. Hanighen February 2, 1949

ANNIVERSARY: In our odd little office this week, there's been a great deal of fumbling for swell language to describe an event in the career of HUMAN EVENTS. Such words as "quinquennial", and "lustrum", and "proud date" have made the eight-foot high ceiling rumble if not ring. Might as well come out with it -- this week's issue marks our fifth anniversary -- a source of pride at our longevity and of humor over our ancient memories. In the early weeks of 1944, a certain dark little apartment in downtown Washington was the delivery room where the parturition took place, and it was a difficult piece of obstetrics. The living room was the editorial sanctum and the much more vital business office was in the bedroom. Rented typewriters made quite a racket, and it was miraculous how many envelopes and mimeographed sheets could be stored on the bed. Kind lady subscribers (properly chaperoned by dachshunds) came in for a few hours to fill and stamp envelopes -- ah, those volunteer workers! And the view, across the H Street roofs, of the mansards of the State Department was an inspiration.

For, on the very top of the State Department, there stood guard a little soldier, apparently stationed there to protect our resident proconsuls from the menace of the Luftwaffe. The absurdity of this sight (the cause of many jokes from our Pentagon friends) was indeed a constant source of inspiration. We had the queer idea, in those days, that a great deal of America's war effort was misplaced, that an essential mission was being neglected, or when given attention, badly bungled. The mission we had in mind was the preparation for the peace which was to follow the war. So, in our first number, February 2, 1944, we had the impudence to suggest that all was not well between Churchill and Stalin, that the recent Tehran conference, billed as a great love feast, was actually the scene of an Anglo-Russian clash and that "Stalin is trying to impose a dictated Munich peace settlement of the Polish question on Great Britain and the United States". How "obstructionist" such statements appeared then; how commonplace they look now. Subsequently, of course, we have performed many a similar caper, and given our tender attention to other areas of bureaucracy than our ineffable State Department; to those awesome official chambers where "everybody's business is nobody's business". And our present habitation, with a less inspiring view, is located in a near-office building, where we boast of all of four rooms. (How we'll pay the rent is another problem about which we boast less.) So, our lustrum (like many others with classical educations, we had to look it up in the dictionary) is this week, and, we warn you, whatever indiscretion we may commit in this lustral year will surely become the commonplace of 1954. But whether the squalling child of 1944 will still be vocal in 1954 -- that rests with Providence and you.

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EMPIRE: We would like to recall another article from that hallowed volume of 1944, one on November 8 of that year, entitled Where We Stand Today. It recognized -- which few did in those years -- that "we have embarked, without knowing it, on a gigantic imperialism", and it laid down the thesis that in our imperial course, which included building up the Far East, we would run into trouble unless we tapped the great reservoir of skills and industry of Central Europe. "Just now", we said, "the United States does not seem to require such assistance. But in five years the United States may find itself in desperate need of much of the human and material resources of Europe." Of course, the Red cell in the State Department did not want to build up Nationalist China with American funds. But, even if it had had the

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will, could we have had full-strength ERP for both Europe and Asia? And isn't this the key to our debacle in China -- that the Morgenthau Plan prevented us from tapping the industrial capacity of Germany and thereby blocked the reconstruction of China? And, if the dismantlers have their way, will we be able to support the burden of Mr. Truman's present "bold new program" of aid to the Hottentots?

The 1944 piece we have mentioned carries a brooding warning about the future of our "gigantic imperialism". It said, "Empire-building, like everything else, has its price; it consumes human and material resources far more rapidly than the well-balanced and frugal economic pursuits of relatively self-contained peoples. Consider, for instance, the fearful drain of the empire-building of France from Louis XIII to Louis XV, and the violent reaction which came a generation later." And the article mentions forgotten imperialisms "of hardly more than episodic significance" which "consumed human and material energy at a fantastic rate. . . . It is worth reflecting that our imperialism, in view of the greater velocity of change in the Twentieth Century could burn itself out in an even shorter period. . . . We may careen along in a brilliant flash . . . and then after one generation relapse in full recession and enfeeblement, our population and material resources exhausted and our social morale in complete dissolution. Finally we would suffer from the reproach of lost opportunity in trying to assume a world role -- or, more bitter still, the reproach of ever having presumed to fill such a role when we might have conserved our strength and ensured our longevity in this hemisphere."

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STALIN: Back in the Eleventh Century, A. D., the Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII had a contest of wills. The Emperor gave in and went to Canossa, where, after he had done penance, the Pope majestically received him. The point is that Henry went to Canossa. Without suggesting that it's at all a parallel, this bit of history comes to mind, as Stalin proposes that Truman go to some spot on the other side of the Iron Curtain, and declines Truman's invitation to visit Washington. Stalin's statement of today shows that he wants to sit in Canossa and enjoy all the prestige therefor. In this situation, it is important to realize that Stalin is leading from strength, not weakness. His epochal victory in China; his triumph in Scandinavia last week end, when the Northern nations failed to make any move to join the Western bloc, are some reasons why the figure in the Kremlin can afford to condescend. There may also be internal reasons -- none too happy even for such a dictator -- why he chooses to intimate that he's ready to deal. But it is well to keep in mind that Stalin actually suggests that the President approach in the role of a suppliant.

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CHINA AFTERMATH: There is no valid reason why the State Department should be happy over our position. Karl H. Von Wiegand, easily the best of American foreign correspondents, cables from Cairo on January 29 (Baltimore American, January 30) that, "There is a feeling in high quarters in Egypt and the Middle East that . . . the tremendous significance of the 'Truman doctrine' and the disaster to world democracy in China is not fully grasped in America and Britain. . . ." Mr. Von Wiegand is quite right. Americans do not realize the reverberations in foreign, friendly chancelleries of our defeat in China. These foreign diplomats know that there have only been two traditional foreign policies of the United States -- the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door. They have seen the latter abandoned, with ensuing Communist victory in China. Latin American diplomats are beginning to wonder if the United States will really guard the southern half of this hemisphere from infiltration or

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attack from outside. But let us return to Mr. Von Wiegand, who sums up by saying: "Geopolitically and ideologically the Chinese debacle is the greatest triumph for Soviet Russia and its Communism since the Russian revolution more than 30 years ago."

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DUTRA: President Dutra, it has been officially announced, will visit this country in May. The official explanation is that he wishes to return Mr. Truman's visit to Rio in 1947. Not unnaturally, observers here laugh at this explanation and are inclined to think the Treasury is really Dutra's objective. There is no confirmation for that idea, but there is for another view. In the preceding story we dwelt on the unfortunate repercussions of our Chinese debacle on Latin American diplomats. We learn that the real reason for the visit of the Brazilian President is that he would like to discover just exactly what the United States proposes to do in foreign policy, and whether there is any chance of our adhering to such a policy if it exists. The Brazilian Chief Executive is having his troubles today with Communists and opportunists like former President Vargas who are trying to get back into power by playing with the Reds. Dutra, it is said, feels that he can, if necessary, ruthlessly suppress such movements by extraordinary security measures. But he notes the capriciousness of our foreign moves and he recalls that the State Department during the war forced Brazil (and other Latin American republics) to recognize Russia and open the gates to the Kremlin termites. He would like to know what's really behind Jay Franklin's prophecy of a new appeasement policy, and just how firm is the new Secretary of State. Brazil has been our most faithful friend among the other American republics, but even the best of friends must be uncertain about the future of our foreign policy.

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STEEL: In a recent issue, we dealt with an episode -- the Alberta strike -- in the strategy of oil. There are now signs of a new development in the strategy of steel. It has been rumored recently that U. S. Steel has purchased 4,000 acres of flat land in eastern Pennsylvania between Trenton and Philadelphia to be used for the erection of a large steel plant. U. S. Steel authorities have denied the story, saying that the land was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad. This column, however, has industriously tried to check the story further. One thing can be said: a certain business organization of great wealth and with great facilities for investigation is convinced that Big Steel is behind the Pennsylvania's purchase of the land and that sooner or later Big Steel will emerge with a plant on the land. This business organization claims that one of its representatives has seen the blueprint. The firm would rather believe that the story wasn't true, but is grimly altering its own plans -- which would collide with those attributed to Big Steel.

If the story is true, the strategy is interesting. It is acknowledged by U. S. Steel that it would like to have a plant on the Atlantic tidewater and would like to break into the New York fabricators' market. Bethlehem, through its plant in Sparrows Point, Maryland, is now able to do this. But the market for the output is of less interest than the source of the raw material. Sparrows Point gets ore from South America. According to the analysis of the above-mentioned business organization, Big Steel also plans to get its iron ore from South America (where it has acquired properties), for this ore would be cheaper than that of Mesabi. The approaching exhaustion of Mesabi (which would not be in its present condition had it not been for the drain of World War II) is a big factor in industrial considerations for the future. In this connection, it is worthy of mention that the projected New England steel plant looks to the use of the great deposits of ore in Quebec and Labrador. Thus, new developments in the industrial world are apparently forcing U. S. concerns not only to move to the Atlantic tidewater, but also to depend on imports of one of the basic materials on which our whole industry depends.

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Book Events

The Failure of Technology: Perfection Without Purpose, by Friedrich Georg Juenger; translated from the German by F. D. Wieck. Hinsdale, Illinois: Henry Regnery Company. $2.75. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This interesting and alarming work was finished on the eve of the second great war but was first published about three years ago in Germany as Die Perfektion der Technik. Perhaps a literal translation of the title would have been better for this English edition; since where there is no purpose there can be no failure. Anyway, Herr Juenger's thesis is that modern man is discovering to his bewilderment and panic that his technologies are not means to an end but ends in themselves, to which every human purpose must be subordinate. The whole world has become a machine, and all life and nature must be brought within the mechanistic pattern.

Mechanism, Herr Juenger argues, is of its nature destructive; and in seeking to prove this he demolishes the whole mythology of progress. It is not true, he tells us, that machines save labor; rather they increase it. The fallacy arises from the quantitative comparison of the product of the machine with that of the handicraftsman. This comparison is deceptive because it ignores the fact that the existence and operation of the machine depend upon a tremendous and ever-increasing organization. Nor is it true that machines create wealth, for indeed they destroy it. What the machine creates is consumption upon a scale that devours the resources of the earth. For the same reason it is false to say that the machine eradicates poverty; rather it universalizes poverty by its ruthless and wasteful destruction of wealth. Thus it brings into being the vast bureaucracies of business and government and so increases the proportion of unproductive workers. These two factors, the exhaustion of resources and the proliferation of parasitic employments, hasten that complete mechanization of Society that we call totalitarianism; for it is scarcity and not abundance that leads to the demand for the rationing of goods. In a healthy economy the destruction of materials is limited by the possibilities of replenishment; that it is impossible to put any such limitation upon technical progress proves that its true genius is not economic at all but something antithetical to economy. It is not even true that technological industry is profitable to its owners and managers, for it leads by its nature to diminishing returns and to accumulating deficits. Not only that, but in the long run technology tends to obliterate the very concepts of property and ownership. It destroys the value of money, because its financial requirements soon surpass anything that can be contained within a sound monetary system, and because it requires that money must be constantly in motion.

Nor again, Herr Juenger tells us, is it true that the machine has brought more leisure into our lives. What it has done is to deprive us of the sense of natural and living time, which is measured by the rhythms of nature, such as the progression of the seasons; it has imposed upon us an abstract and mathematical, or, as he calls it, "dead" time, which can be measured by clocks and efficiency experts. Thus we have actually no time for life. As the technical organization into which we are absorbed grows more and more complex, we lose more of the character of rational beings and acquire more of the purely functional character of machines. Hence our aimless and nervous hurry; for the characteristic of machines is motion. The automatisms which govern our motions at the assembly line, govern us also as we drive home at the precise pace prescribed by the synchronized traffic lights. Yet beneath the automatism is a deep unquiet, a sense of sterility, frustration and danger, and a craving for security. But this craving can never be satisfied, for the insecurity actually arises from the knowledge of our dependence upon organization; the cure we demand in the form of social insurance merely aggravates the disease.

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